

## What Is a General Management Plan?

Every 20 to 25 years, the National Park Service brings together park neighbors and friends, elected officials, interested citizens, private organizations and public agencies to develop a shared vision for the future of a park. This multi-year effort generates a General Management Plan, or GMP, that will guide the management and development of the park and the opportunities it provides for visitors for the next 20 years.

Currently, Hopewell Furnace has a Master Plan that was developed in 1964 and focused on the development of buildings, roads and trails. Since then, many of the elements identified in the plan have been completed; recent scholarship has revealed new information; and resource conditions and visitor demands have substantially changed.

So far, this GMP has contracted studies to identify the condition of natural and cultural resources in the park and their connections with systems that extend beyond the park boundaries. Conclusions from this work were used at a Historians' Roundtable (June 2003) and a Natural Resources Roundtable (October 2003) where scholars, community members, land managers, public officials and National Park Service staff discussed the studies and their impact on the park. (See page 3 for a further description of these resource roundtables.) In turn, these discussions helped frame draft purpose and significance statements and to identify draft interpretive themes and desired visitor experiences for the park.

As the General Management Plan process continues, we will work with the public to assess the existing resource conditions and identify a range of resource protection strategies, development options and visitor experiences that would meet these purpose and significance statements. These assessments and alternatives will be described in the draft plan for public review and comment, along with a statement of their impacts and costs. The comments will be reviewed and a final General Management Plan produced and distributed. (See schedule to right.)

As we move through the assessment of resources and the development of the range of alternatives, we will explore a number of topics. Some of the questions that will be discussed include:

- What is the desired visitor experience at the park? What stories should be told and what is their connection to other sites? How should the National Park Service protect and manage the cultural and natural resources of the park? How can this be achieved while still offering a high quality visitor experience?
- What buildings, roads, paths or other facilities are needed to support these resource conservation and visitor experience goals? Are the existing amenities adequate and, if not, what is needed and at what location(s)?
- What role should the National Park Service play in the conservation of related resources in the community? What kind of relationship should be developed with the park's neighbors – private landowners, townships, counties and the state, parks and historic sites in the area, and conservation, education and tourism organizations?

With the assistance of friends, partners and the general public, the National Park Service will use these questions to develop a range of strategies, called "alternatives," for meeting the park goals. These will be presented in a draft document, along with a statement of their impacts and costs, and distributed for public review. Comments on this *Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* will be assessed and incorporated into a *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*.

Implementation of the recommended actions in the plan will begin after the final document is approved and published in the Record of Decision.